

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending in the present application. The current non-final Office Action has rejected all of the claims as anticipated by one reference, US 2004/0255122 A1, Ingberman et al. (hereinafter Ingberman). Claims 1, 16, 17, 18, and 19 have been amended in the instant response. Additionally, the formal drawings that were filed in the USPTO on March 1, 2004, have been accepted by the Examiner.

USC 102 Rejection

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-19 under 35 USC 102 (e) as being anticipated by Ingberman. The Office Action found that all of the elements of the claimed invention were either taught by the Ingberman reference or were inherent. Applicants respectfully disagree for at least the reasons discussed below.

The first paragraph of amended Claim 1, determines the degree of separation between each of a plurality of nodes that are associated with a first node, wherein the first node and at least a portion of the associated plurality of nodes are granted membership in a community based on a number of degrees of separation between the first node and a second node in the community, and wherein the granting of membership in the community is controlled by at least an adaptive cut-off radius for the community.

As described in the Specification, a node's community is also controlled in size based on an adaptive cut off radius that is based on more than just the degrees of separation from another node. For example, once a semi-stable state of growth is detected for a community associated with a particular node, a cut-off radius adaptively prevents the granting of further memberships in the community for other nodes with even relatively close degrees of separation which may have been almost automatically granted while the size of the community was relatively small. (Page 12, lines 6-15). By limiting the membership in a community that has attained a relatively stable state of growth, relatively significant resource savings can be attained.

In contrast, Ingerman provides for no such adaptive cut-off radius for limiting prospective members in a community. Instead, the cited reference provides for analyzing all messaging entities with reduced degrees of separation for reliability and assigning a value to each such entity. In particular, “[s]ending entities having reduced degrees of separation from recipient entities and sending entities that are in recipient entities’ address books WILL receive increased reliability index values.” (See Page 7, paragraph 0063, emphasis added). These index values are subsequently employed to increase or decrease the likelihood of trust between the messaging entities.

Furthermore, since Ingerman does not teach a limit to the number of messaging entities that can be provided with reliability index values in regard to each other, an almost infinite amount of resources would be required to maintain this unbounded relationship information for a system with a large number of messaging entities, such as the Internet. Therefore, Ingerman does not teach or suggest the adaptive cut-off radius of amended Claim 1, and this aspect of the invention is neither anticipated nor obvious in view of the cited reference.

The second paragraph of amended Claim 1, provides for determining one of a plurality of levels of trust for the first node in the community based on the number of degrees of separation between the first node and another node in the community

In contrast, Ingerman teaches a different determination of a likelihood of trust based on the separately determined reliability index value between messaging entities. This reliability index value is subsequently used for indicating the reliability of messaging entities included in the separate trust list. (See Page 7, paragraph 0063). Clearly, Ingerman does not teach or suggest the claimed trust levels for nodes that are members of a community with an adaptive cut-off radius.

The third paragraph of amended Claim 1, provides for if a message is received by the first node in the community from another node in the community, employing the level of trust associated with the other node to determine if the message is to be delivered to at least one trusted folder associated with the first node. Clearly, the claimed trusted folder is more than just an inbox for received messages. Rather it is a folder that stores trusted messages which are separate from

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Application No.: 10/790,332

10

Docket No.: 08226/1200369-US1

untrusted messages that are stored in another folder. The other folder handles untrusted messages in a variety of ways, e.g., immediately deleting untrusted messages, or storing them for optional review and/or subsequent deletion after a period of time. (See Specification, page 9, line 25-28, page 14, lines 22-25).

In contrast to the Claimed invention, Ingberman's teaches a generic inbox that receives both trusted and untrusted messages with no differentiation on how they are handled. Clearly, there is no "inherency" in the Ingberman reference for the Claimed trusted folder.

Additionally, amended independent Claims 16, 17, 18, and 19, are substantially similar to amended independent Claim 1, albeit different in some ways. Consequently, these independent claims are at least unanticipated and non-obvious for at least the same reasons as independent Claim 1. Furthermore, dependent Claims 2-15, are also novel and unobvious for at least substantially the same reasons as independent Claim 1, upon which they depend.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is now in condition for allowance, and asks that a Notice of Allowance be granted at the earliest convenience.

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Customer No. 38880

Respectfully submitted,

By _____
John W. Branch

Registration No.: 41,633
DARBY & DARBY P.C.
P.O. Box 5257
New York, New York 10150-5257
(206) 262-8900
(212) 527-7701 (Fax)
Attorneys/Agents For Applicant

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